
EERE Regional Office Stakeholder Update -- April-May 2006

This newsletter is intended to keep stakeholders of the U.S. Department of Energy's Regional Offices (ROs) informed during this period of transition to a consolidated organization under the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's (EERE) Project Management Center. See information at end if you wish to be removed from distribution. If you are unable to view or print the newsletter, a PDF version is available online at <http://www.eere.energy.gov/regions/consolidation.html>.

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* Angela Young has been selected as NETL's Intergovernmental Projects and Outreach (IPO) Division director; Chuck Zeh had been acting in this position, while Young had been performing as the IPO Outreach Team lead, a position which will be filled in the near future. She is preparing to move from Atlanta to Pittsburgh.

* RO employee e-mail addresses changing

E-mail addresses for RO personnel moving to the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) and the Golden Field Office will change as of June 30 as they move to their new duty stations. Meanwhile, because they are co-located with Golden, the e-mail addresses for the Central Regional Office employees have already changed.

To contact RO employees moving to Golden, the e-mail format will be:
firstname.lastname@go.doe.gov.

To contact RO employees moving to NETL, the e-mail format will be:
firstname.lastname@netl.doe.gov.

- * E-mail notices to remain until July 30

Once the e-mail addresses change, anyone trying to reach RO employees at their old e-mail addresses will receive a notice giving the new e-mail address. This notification system will remain active until July 30.

- * Cell phones will be used to help with communication during transition

Cell phones and blackberries for current RO employees will be deactivated as each employee leaves the RO, and new cell phones and blackberries will be issued as needed to staff after they arrive at either GO or NETL. In the meantime, to keep the lines of communication open between the time RO cell phones are turned in and RO staff are at their new job locations, key RO personnel will be issued other cell phones to use during that period.

So, even after the ROs have been physically closed and staff are in the process of moving, key staff will still be reachable to help you with your needs. We will distribute the cell numbers for these key staff in the near future, but you are still encouraged to get in touch with your normal contacts at the ROs before the end of June to be sure you have whatever contact numbers you will need during the physical transition period in late June.

Programs and projects -- what's the difference?

What is the difference between a "project" and a "program" and between a "project officer" and "program manager"? The definitions of the terms come into play in helping understand that while Golden and NETL will administer different programs, project officers for all programs will be located at both sites.

By programs, we mean broad technology research areas, such as wind, solar and buildings, and for each of these program areas, there is a program manager at EERE in Washington. Golden and NETL each support a distinct suite of EERE's programs by managing the projects under those programs.

Project officers in the field are responsible for overseeing a portfolio of projects under a particular program.

EERE program research and development (R&D) work has been clearly divided between Golden and NETL. Each field organization has R&D project officers specific to their assigned program needs. Currently, projects managed by the PMC's project officers are almost entirely R&D, cost-shared between government and the private sector, and usually technology demonstrations intended to work out the bugs prior to commercialization.

However, project officers involved in education, outreach, and state and local government activities will be located at both sites for all programs, and will retain their historic regional focus. Projects overseen by the ROs have generally been geared toward using government resources to increase the use of proven technologies. These projects will be administered by project officers in the new IPO organizations at both NETL and Golden.

Each type of project management requires a different skill set. R&D projects managed by Golden and NETL currently require considerable knowledge of the technologies involved, along with knowledge of business and project management. Projects managed by the ROs require more

knowledge of outreach and partnership building. Under the consolidated organization, the PMC will become responsible for both types, thus providing continuous involvement with technologies from the point they are mature enough to leave the laboratory and are in successful in the marketplace.

State energy officers needing assistance with a particular project should first contact the appropriate project officer at either Golden (for roughly the western half of the country) or NETL (for the eastern half), regardless of where the responsibility for the program's suite of projects may lie.

For example, an energy officer in a western state concerned about a buildings project should contact the buildings project officer at Golden, even though NETL has primary responsibility for support to the buildings program.

Higher-level issues, the kind that stakeholders would normally bring to the attention of an RO director under the current organization, should be directed to the states coordinator at Golden (Julie Riel) or NETL (Eddie Christy). Christy is serving in an acting capacity. At this point, the vacancy announcement has closed and NETL is close to making a selection.

State energy offices have expressed a need for information on program and project contacts as soon as possible. We are aware of this need and are working to firm up that information and get it out as soon as possible.

What will stay the same and what will change?

Things that will stay the same under the new organization:

- * Continued interface between state energy office staff and federal DOE staff
- * The issuance and management of formula grants
- * WinSAGA
- * How payments of funds are handled
- * Monitoring visits to state energy offices
- * Technical assistance to state energy offices

Areas in which change is expected:

- * Greater reliance on telephone and e-mail, and videoconferencing where possible, as opposed to face-to-face interactions between state personnel and DOE staff
- * State energy officers dealing with two contracting offices instead of the current one
- * Greater focus on affiliations among stakeholders based on climate, geography or

technology, as opposed to affiliations based on the current six regions

The process for awards after the consolidation

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- * NETL will handle procurement for formula awards
 - * Omnibus awards will be divided between NETL and Golden according to regional affiliations
 - * Information on points of contact will be on the PMC web site as the information becomes available. The web address is:
<http://www.eere-pmc.energy.gov> <<http://www.eere-pmc.energy.gov>>
 - * Transfer amendments were completed by April 30
 - * All the grants moving to NETL will initially be transferred to Chuck Zeh; after the transition, they will be transferred to the appropriate staff project officers
 - * Grants.gov will be mandatory for application submittal beginning in FY07

NETL holds series of stakeholder meetings

The National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) held meetings with stakeholders in each of the three current eastern Regional Office (RO) regions (Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast) during the latter part of April. The meetings were intended to help inform stakeholders about the coming consolidation of the Regional Offices into the EERE Project Management Center (the Golden Field Office and NETL) and to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

The response was excellent, both in terms of attendance and participation, according to Larry Carpenter, director of the EERE Project Management Center office at NETL. The Golden Field Office is planning a combined meeting for the three western regions (Midwest, Central and Western) August 1-3 in Golden, Colo.

Stakeholder comments, concerns voiced at the meetings:

- * State representatives expressed a desire to have a post-consolidation meeting, sometime in August or thereafter. They also said they want to continue regional meetings and forums in some manner, including: weatherization directors (at NASCSP, NCAF, or other national conferences); state energy office directors (at NASEO or other national conferences); combined meetings of weatherization and state energy office directors; Weatherization Assistance Program and State

Energy Program pre-application meetings; and sub-program and/or technology peer information exchanges

- * NETL asked stakeholders attending what current regional efforts need to be preserved. The responses from the state energy offices included State Energy Program emergency plans and emergency support, which are needed throughout the hurricane season; regional level support, including a contact the state energy offices can use to help them deal with emergencies; the lack of Public Benefits Funds in the Southeast; the general lack of resources in the Southeast; and the need for federal support on a regional level.

NETL responded that the DOE Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability has an office at NETL along with an emergency operations office that can perhaps be better integrated with the EERE staff for energy emergencies.

- * The states feel strongly that training and technical assistance is a high priority and needs to continue, especially for the Weatherization Assistance Program and State Energy Program

- * Monitoring visits, especially for the Weatherization Assistance Program and State Energy Program, are a high priority with the states, with programmatic and financial procedures a primary concern

- * DOE needs to visit a state after there has been a change in that state government's leadership to inform the new leadership on DOE programs, exchange information, discuss issues and communicate expectations and needs

- * DOE needs to consider how to work with states to maintain some form of "regional" or "sub-regional" identity. One suggestion was to group states based on climate, technology, or end-use sectors

- * States need training and information on systems used by EERE, including WinSAGA, Grants.gov, and STRIPES

- * DOE should keep in mind that the states are required to submit emergency plans to the ROs for approval and that the plans document how to deal with energy emergencies. The plans are developed in accordance with DOE's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability priorities, including demand response, fuel supplies and seasonal concerns, and they include how to communicate clearly and quickly with the appropriate state contacts in emergencies

- * The states asked DOE to help coordinate and gain access to technical assistance from DOE's national laboratories

- * One commenter noted that DOE's presence and support often adds credibility to state programs and activities and helps attract the attention of state decision makers

- * With the above in mind, some state representatives said they want DOE to be an advocate for their programs in the states, in addition to being a service provider and field implementer

- * DOE needs to clarify and communicate the role of the states coordinators at Golden and NETL

- * Some attendees voiced a desire for clearer metrics related to awardees' performance under grants

- * Some voiced concerns that they will not receive the level of service nor the frequency of contact they had in the past

Closeout plans for RO web sites

The current regional office web sites will be closed out and archived June 1. In advance of this, a web transition team has analyzed the current sites and will move unique content to the EERE web site.

On June 1, a notice will be posted on the home pages of all current RO web sites announcing the sites will be closed, even though the home pages will continue for 30 days, containing "bookmark text" and links to EERE web pages where information previously posted on RO web sites can be found.

Most of the information will be moved to three primary areas of the EERE web site: State Partnerships and Activities, Financial Opportunities, and Consumer Information.

Responses to questions we have received from stakeholders

* What efforts are being made to preserve institutional knowledge?

As the regional office staff prepares to move into their new positions at Golden and NETL, we are making all possible efforts to retain institutional knowledge as well as maintaining historical documents, both electronic and paper.

We are in the process of moving all grant files to Golden and NETL, where they will be accessible to project managers and others who need them within the new combined organization. Also, current regional office project managers copying those files they might need during the final days of moving to their new duty stations.

At the same time, we are backing up and duplicating all electronic files in the regional offices, including personal work files. These electronic files will then be physically transported to file servers at Golden and NETL. Nothing will be abandoned.

Also, since the majority of RO employees will be accepting new duty stations at Golden and NETL, their institutional knowledge obviously moves with them into the new combined organization.

In many cases, the same project managers will continue working with the state energy office personnel and other stakeholders with whom they currently work. In those instances in which work will be transferred to a different project manager, debriefings will be held to make certain that the work and knowledge flow will be disrupted as little as possible.

* Is a replacement planned for WinSAGA any time in the new future?

EERE is working to transition to a unified data entry system eventually, but WinSAGA will continue to be the primary data entry system used by state energy offices for the foreseeable future. After the consolidation, states will continue to have the same ability to access WinSAGA as they do now, including the ability to enter and update on-line Financial Status Reports and Program Reports, and enter annual state applications.

The current WinSAGA blackout period has been necessary to create a consolidated, internal data system to be used under the new EERE field organization; this change should be transparent to stakeholders once WinSAGA is restored.

RO employee updates

* Central Regional Office

Nothing to report this period.

* Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

Christopher Abbuehl has resigned his position as the FEMP Biomass and Alternative Methane Fuels (BAMF) mainstream financing representative and the project manager for the Northeast Region Super-ESPC. His responsibilities have been transferred to Thomas Hattery for the Northeast Region Super-ESPC, and to Carson ("Doug") Culbreth for BAMF. Abbuehl has accepted a position with Constellation Energy.

Sandra Burton, who was an Enfield Enterprises support services contractor, has resigned her position as the solar energy project monitor, Green Communities project monitor, and communications and outreach point of contact. She has accepted a position with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, which houses the Delaware Energy Office. Elizabeth Cahall is now the project manager for solar energy and Green Communities, and James M. Ferguson is now the communications and outreach point of contact.

* Midwest Regional Office

Victoria Lopez, procurement and fiscal specialist on the business team, has left for a position with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation, which is located in a south Chicago suburb. Rosemary Vela, business team lead, will continue to be the primary business contact in the Midwest Regional Office.

John Devine, buildings and codes project manager, will be leaving DOE May 12 after recently accepting a position with the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA) in Chicago. MEEA is a Midwest market transformation organization formed by the 8 Midwestern states with the support of DOE, EPA and the Energy Foundation. Devine will continue to work with the Midwest state energy offices, utilities and private businesses on many of the DOE buildings programs through this regional nongovernmental organization. Stephanie Sung, acting partnership team lead, and Peter Dreyfuss, regional director, will be the contacts for the buildings programs after John's departure.

Steve Palmeri, partnership team lead and Rebuild America project manager, is continuing a detail that may last until June 30, with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region V. He will be working on activities including the National Incident Management System and catastrophic planning related issues and procedures and working with the many state and local partners in the region. Stephanie Sung will be acting team lead in Steve's absence and Joe Lucas will handle Rebuild America responsibilities.

Celeste Moerle, SEP project manager, is continuing a detail that may last until June 30, with the U.S. Department of Labor's Region V Office. She will be working on a variety of workforce development studies and analyses and assisting in implementing programs related to the office's

workforce development activities. Rosemary Vela will be the contact for any State Energy Program questions in Celeste's absence.

Bill Hui, wind project manager, has announced that he has formally accepted a position as a project manager at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in Washington, D.C. His responsibilities will focus on regulating and certifying existing and new nuclear power plants. Bill will start in his new job in July and expects the transition to occur as the ROs are consolidated and closed, so he will continue to cover Wind Program activities until the end of June.

* Northeast Regional Office

Stephen Costa, industrial project manager and State Energy Program project manager for New Hampshire, has accepted a three-day-a-week detail with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center through May 12. He will continue to be the point of contact for all assigned program activities.

* Southeast Regional Office

Nothing to report this period.

* Western Regional Office

Kim Penfold, contact for bioenergy/biomass programs and Clean Cities, has resigned from federal service. Either Jeff James or Roxanne Dempsey can help with these programs.

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